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**Human rights questions: human rights questions,
including alternative approaches for improving
the effective enjoyment of human rights and
fundamental freedoms**

The right to development

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

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I. Introduction

1. By its resolution 57/223 of 18 December 2002, entitled "The right to development", the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to bring that resolution to the attention of Member States, United Nations organs and bodies, specialized agencies, funds and programmes, international development and financial institutions, in particular the Bretton Woods institutions and non-governmental organizations, and to submit a comprehensive report on the implementation of the resolution to the Assembly at its fifty-eighth session. The report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/58/276 has been submitted to the General Assembly accordingly. In addition to the replies reflected in that report, two contributions were subsequently received, one from the Government of the Azerbaijani Republic, the other from the Government of the Republic of Venezuela, which are summarized below. The complete replies are on file with the Secretariat and are available for consultation.

II. Replies received from Governments

A. Azerbaijani Republic

[Original: Russian]
[20 August 2003]

2. The Government of Azerbaijan informed that its Constitution referred to the economic and social development of the State. The development of the economy served to enhance the people's well-being and contributed to the development of culture, education, health care, science and the arts. In addition, the Rights of the Child Act of the Azerbaijani Republic provided for the right to life and physical, mental and moral development under normal conditions and a State programme aimed at addressing the social, economic and other problems of gifted adolescents and creative youth, as well as establishing the conditions for identifying and encouraging the development of young talents.

3. Other initiatives addressed the HIV/AIDS epidemic, aimed at improving the social protection of the population, and at developing small and medium-scale enterprises.

4. Despite those efforts, it has not been possible to eliminate negative trends affecting the population's standard of living; the problem of unemployment has not been resolved and the minimum wage has not been raised to an amount guaranteeing a minimum subsistence level for citizens.

5. The State programme on poverty reduction and economic development was thus prepared with a view to further strengthening the social protection of the population in the near future and providing for the measures necessary to reduce the level of poverty.

6. The Government underlined that the economic difficulties exist not only because of the transitional stage in the economy, but also mainly as a result of the unresolved conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, which has led to more than 1 million refugees and displaced persons. In that context, it was pointed out that steps

have been taken to regulate the legal status and matters concerning the social protection of refugees and displaced persons.

7. Measures have also been adopted to resolve the problems of the relocation of Azerbaijanis who have been forced to leave their lands, and to improve the social and everyday situation in tent camps.

8. Finally, the Government stated that it placed high importance on the gender aspect in the realization of the right to development. In that context, it is increasingly involving women in the processes taking place in society, such as appointing women judges. The Government has also established a State Committee on Women's Issues and adopted a National Plan of Action for Women.

B. Republic of Venezuela

[Original: Spanish]

[14 October 2003]

9. The Government of the Republic of Venezuela draws attention to its Constitution, which establishes a series of values, such as social justice, equality, solidarity, social responsibility, respect for human rights, ethics, liberty and political pluralism, which it considers crucial for the realization of the right to development.

10. Among the policies and programmes undertaken, attention is drawn to the right to health and the duty of the State to guarantee it on an equitable basis. The Ministry of Health and Social Development informed on its Strategic Social Plan, an instrument to enable substantive changes in the conditions governing the quality of life and health. Another important initiative was the establishment of the Social Department, a permanent body for the administration and coordination of social policy. That body places particular emphasis on integrated services for children, food safety and basic social infrastructure. In addition, a series of laws have been promulgated to protect certain population groups, including children, adolescents and women. Other relevant legislation is being discussed, relating to participation of citizens, social security, health and the family.

11. Finally, the Government of Venezuela informed on the establishment by the Office of the Ombudsman of offices with national jurisdiction dealing with matters relating to children and adolescents, the environment, public services, indigenous peoples, the prison system, the disabled, health and social security. The offices were established with the aim of promoting, defending and monitoring human rights in those areas, fostering at the same time respect for, and giving impetus to, human development, quality of life and the free development of the personality.